

For Immediate Release

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This bill would provide health insurance coverage for 115,000 uninsured residents in the 13th District

Washington D.C.- Today, Congressman Sires joined his colleagues in passing H.R. 3962, the Affordable Health Care for America Act by a vote of 220 to 215. This bill would provide quality affordable health care for Americans and control the increasing growth in health care costs. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that this legislation would provide health coverage to 96 percent of Americans, while reducing the deficit by \$129 billion over the next 10 years.

“It was with the needs of the 13th District in mind that I cast my vote in support of health care reform today,” expressed Congressman Sires. “This bill would expand health care coverage to the 23 percent of individuals currently residing in my district without health insurance, as well as improve the health coverage of the 326,000 residents presently covered by their employers.”

Specifically, H.R. 3962 would improve our health insurance system by imposing new requirements on health insurers, including ending discrimination for pre-existing conditions; eliminating the practice of rescission; prohibiting co-pays for preventive and wellness care; placing annual caps on out-of-pocket costs for consumers; and removing yearly or lifetime costs caps on what insurers cover. This bill would also promote shared responsibility among individuals, employers and government to ensure that all Americans have affordable coverage of essential health benefits. Additionally, this legislation would make critical investments in our public health infrastructure, the health workforce, and wellness prevention efforts.

In order to bring competition and choice into the insurance market, H.R. 3962 would create a Health Insurance Exchange as a new marketplace for individuals and small employers to comparison shop among private and public plans, including the choice of a new public health insurance option. Financed by its own premiums, the public option would bring a new choice to many areas of the country where marketplaces are dominated by just one or two private insurers. To ensure that coverage is affordable for all Americans, affordability credits would be provided to qualified individuals to purchase insurance in the Exchange; tax credits of up to 50 percent would be available for certain small businesses to acquire insurance; and Medicaid

would be expanded to cover individuals with incomes up to 150 percent of the federal poverty level.

Furthermore, this bill would improve and strengthen Medicare by filling the donut hole over time in the Part D drug program; eliminating cost-sharing for preventive services; improving the low-income subsidy programs within Medicare; increasing access to primary care providers; improving payment accuracy; encouraging delivery system reforms; and extending the solvency of the Medicare Trust fund.

“One of the more important aspects of this historic legislation, endorsed by AARP, is the security it provides for our nation's seniors. I am particularly proud that this bill will save 4,700 seniors in my district alone thousands of dollars a year by closing the prescription drug donut hole in Medicare,” stated Congressman Sires.

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